

**INFANT BATH SUPPORT SYSTEM**

**TECHNICAL FIELD**

The invention relates to bathing systems, and, more particularly, the  
invention relates to infant bathing systems.

**STATEMENT OF A PROBLEM ADDRESSED BY THIS INVENTION**

*Interpretation Considerations*

This section describes the technical field in more detail, and discusses  
problems encountered in the technical field. This section does not describe prior  
art as defined for purposes of anticipation or obviousness under 35 U.S.C. section  
102 or 35 U.S.C. section 103. Thus, nothing stated in the Statement of a Problem  
Addressed by This Invention is to be construed as prior art

*Discussion*

When a parent is washing an infant the parent will often use an infant  
bathing means, such as a bath chair, bath support, bath ring, or bath station, for  
example, to secure the infant while the infant is being bathed within a water basin.  
The infant bathing means assists the parent two-fold: first, to secure the infant  
such that the infant can not squirm and wiggle away and secondly, to prevent the

infant from injuring him or herself, by slipping and sliding within a water basin and more importantly, inhaling water, thus causing the infant to choke and drown.

5 In general, infants have a short attention span and when secured tightly within a bathing means an infant may become bored start to squirm and kick and ultimately begin to cry and scream. Commonly, a parent is preoccupied with the act of washing the infant and is unable to effectively entertain the infant. In addition, once the infant begins to squirm and kick the act of bathing the infant becomes even more difficult and more effort is required to bath the infant, thus  
10 further upsetting the infant. Accordingly, the inability to entertain an infant effectively while bathing the infant such that the infant does not become bored may lead to an improperly washed infant, an upset, kicking and screaming infant and an overall unpleasant bathing experience for both the parent and the infant.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Various aspects of the invention, as well as at least one embodiment, are better understood by reference to the following EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENT OF A BEST MODE. To better understand the invention, the EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENT OF A BEST MODE should be read in conjunction with the drawings in which:

Figure 1 illustrates an infant bath support system;

Figure 2 illustrates a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of an infant bath support system;

Figure 3 illustrates a top view of a preferred embodiment of an infant bath support system; and

Figure 4 illustrates a bottom view of a preferred embodiment of an infant bath support system.

AN EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENT OF A BEST MODE

*Interpretation Considerations*

When reading this section (An Exemplary Embodiment of a Best Mode, which describes an exemplary embodiment of the best mode of the invention, hereinafter “exemplary embodiment”), one should keep in mind several points. First, the following exemplary embodiment is what the inventor believes to be the best mode for practicing the invention at the time this patent was filed. Thus, since one of ordinary skill in the art may recognize from the following exemplary embodiment that substantially equivalent structures or substantially equivalent acts may be used to achieve the same results in exactly the same way, or to achieve the same results in a not dissimilar way, the following exemplary embodiment should not be interpreted as limiting the invention to one embodiment.

Likewise, individual aspects (sometimes called species) of the invention are provided as examples, and, accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art may recognize from a following exemplary structure (or a following exemplary act) that a substantially equivalent structure or substantially equivalent act may be used to either achieve the same results in substantially the same way, or to achieve the same results in a not dissimilar way.

Accordingly, the discussion of a species (or a specific item) invokes the genus (the class of items) to which that species belongs as well as related species in that genus. Likewise, the recitation of a genus invokes the species known in the art. Furthermore, it is recognized that as technology develops, a number of additional alternatives to achieve an aspect of the invention may arise. Such advances are hereby incorporated within their respective genus, and should be recognized as being functionally equivalent or structurally equivalent to the aspect shown or described.

Second, the only essential aspects of the invention are identified by the claims. Thus, aspects of the invention, including elements, acts, functions, and relationships (shown or described) should not be interpreted as being essential unless they are explicitly described and identified as being essential. Third, a function or an act should be interpreted as incorporating all modes of doing that function or act, unless otherwise explicitly stated (for example, one recognizes that “tacking” may be done by nailing, stapling, gluing, hot gunning, riveting, etc., and so a use of the word tacking invokes stapling, gluing, etc., and all other modes of that word and similar words, such as “attaching”). Fourth, unless explicitly stated otherwise, conjunctive words (such as “or”, “and”, “including”, or “comprising” for example) should be interpreted in the inclusive, not the exclusive, sense. Fifth, the words “means” and “step” are provided to facilitate

the reader's understanding of the invention and do not mean "means" or "step" as defined in §112, paragraph 6 of 35 U.S.C., unless used as "means for – functioning–" or "step for –functioning–" in the Claims section.

5 *Discussion of the Figures*

The invention can be characterized as an infant bath support system. The invention provides a means for enabling a parent to effectively entertain an infant during the bathing act thereby preventing an infant from becoming bored and irritable during the bathing process. In a preferred embodiment, the infant bath support system comprises a housing molded to generally represent an automobile adapted to attach an infant bathing means to a water basin portion. The housing adapts to collapse via at least one plastic hinge such that its size is reduced when stored. Furthermore, the housing adapts to receive at least one entertainment accessory that is removably attachable, such as a mirror or rotating wheel, for example.

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Features and advantages of the invention can be better understood by reviewing Figure 1, which illustrates an infant bath support system 100. The system 100 comprises a housing 110 adapted to secure an infant bathing means 120 to a basin 130. In a preferred embodiment, the housing 110 comprises a molded shell of plastic, fiberglass, or other semi-rigid material, and generally

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represents an automobile that adapts to secure an infant bathing means 120 to a portion of the basin 130 via a fastening means (not shown). Common fastening means are readily known in the art, and include, for example, a suction cup.

5           The housing 110 represents a transportation means, and preferably represents an object such as a racecar, fire truck, police car, or speed boat, for example. In addition, the housing 110 may represent a plant, insect, or animal (such as a horse, giraffe, hippopotamus, or zebra) for example, and preferably comprises ABS plastic, however, in alternative embodiments the housing 100  
10       may comprise, fiberglass, wood, metal, Plexiglas™, or other material as known to those skilled in the art of making molded housings, for example.

          In one embodiment, the housing 110 adapts to collapse, such that its size is reduced for convenient storage. In the mechanical arts there are known many  
15       methods of making structures collapsible, and these methods, upon reading the present disclosure, will be readily apparent. In a preferred embodiment, the invention adapts to collapse via plastic hinges. In an alternative embodiment, the housing 110 may comprise of at least two components enabled to attach when in use and detach when stored, such that when the portions are detached, the housing  
20       110 size is reduced and the individual components may be easily stored. It should be apparent to those skilled in the art that the housing 110, comprising of at least

two components, may be attached and detached via at least one fastening means, such as a bracket, screw, or snap, for example.

5 In a preferred embodiment, the housing 110 adapts to receive at least one entertainment accessory that may be removably attached, such as a pinwheel, a battery powered system, stuffed animal, or toy, for example. Battery powered systems include any system that articulates an entertainment accessory portion or enables a sound system powered by at least one battery, and, of course, should be placed in water-tight battery compartments. It will be apparent to those skilled in  
10 the art of electronics that a sound system projects a digital or a prerecorded sound via at least one speaker. Sounds may include that of an animal or human voice, for example.

15 In one embodiment, the housing 110 generally represents a police car having one entertainment accessory representing a driver's mirror and another generally representing a rotating wheel enabled to rotate around a central axis (steering wheel). In alternative embodiment, the housing 110 generally represents an insect, such as a lady bug, having multiple entertainment accessories representing brightly colored spots that spin and brightly colored antennae. It will  
20 be apparent to those skilled in the art, that an accessory when attached shall provide entertainment to an infant within the infant bathing means 120. It will be



also apparent to those skilled in the art, that an accessory may be integrally formed within the housing 110.

Accordingly, the infant bathing means 120 includes any device used to  
5 assist with the bathing of an infant within a basin 130. In one embodiment, the  
infant bathing means 120 comprises a bath support that positions an infant less  
than 6 months old in a generally horizontal bathing position. In an alternative  
embodiment, the infant bathing means 120 may be a bathing seat that positions an  
infant between 6 to 15 months in a generally sitting position. It will also be  
10 apparent to those skilled in the art, that children over the age of 15 months may  
also use the infant bathing support system 100 when bathing, however, the infant  
bathing means 120, may be larger in size. In addition, the infant bathing means  
may include a bathing ring or bathing station. Furthermore, it will also be  
apparent, that a bathing means 120 may or may not have a fastening means that  
15 adapts to secure an infant of any age to the bathing support.

The basin 130 comprises any open usually circular vessel with sloping or  
curving sides used typically for holding water for washing. In one embodiment,  
the basin 130 comprises a full size adult bathtub. In an alternative embodiment,  
20 the basin 130 comprises a sink. In yet another embodiment, the basin 130

comprises a portable bathing unit, such as a plastic bathing apparatus, and may also be a portable infant “swimming pool.”

Figure 2 illustrates a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of an infant bath support system 200. The system 200 comprises a housing 210 generally representing an automobile having at least one entertainment accessory 240, and adapted to secure an infant bathing means 220 to a basin 230. The infant bathing means 220 adapts to assist holding an infant 222 while being bathed. The infant bathing means 220, in a preferred embodiment, may comprise of at least one harness 224 enabled to secure the infant 222 to the bathing means, such that the risk of an infant 222 being injured or drowning is reduced and or prevented.

Preferably, the infant bathing means 220 comprises a bathing chair adapted to be removably coupled to the housing 210 via a fastening means (not shown). It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that the housing 210 also may have an infant bathing means 220 integrally formed within the housing 210. Furthermore, a custom infant bathing means 220 may also be designed to specifically attach to or fit within the molded housing 210.

Figure 3 illustrates a top view of a preferred embodiment of an infant bath support system 300. The system 300 comprises a housing 310 generally

representing a racecar having at least one mirror 312 and one steering wheel 314 adapted to attach to a portion of the housing 310. The housing 310 adapts to secure an infant bathing means 320, preferably an infant bathing seat, to a portion of a basin 330.

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Figure 4 illustrates a bottom view of a preferred embodiment of an infant bath support system 400. The bottom most portions of the housing 410 adapts to secure an infant bathing means 420 to a basin (not shown) via a fastening means 415. Preferably, the fastening means comprises at least one suction cup. In an alternative embodiment, the fastening means may be at least one magnet or a row of double stick tape or Velcro™, for example. It will be apparent that other fastening means 415 may be used to secure the housing 410 to the basin as known to those skilled in the art.

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Thus, though the invention has been described with respect to a specific preferred embodiment, many variations and modifications will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon reading the present application. It is therefore the intention that the appended claims be interpreted as broadly as possible in view of the prior art to include all such variations and modifications.

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